

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government
Room 350

Testifying in Support of Inclusion of the MT Votes expense in HB-2

Jane Weber, representing the Cascade County Board of Commissioners

February 4, 2013

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Jane Weber. I am a Cascade County Commissioner and I stand before you today representing the Cascade County Board of Commissioners in support of including funding for the ongoing maintenance of the Montana Votes computerized voter registration system in HB-2. Cascade County, like many other counties continually struggles to provide the basic life safety and public infrastructure needs for our citizens. I commend the Secretary of State's office for careful fiscal management which has enabled the state to finance the support and annual maintenance of our statewide computerized voter registration system for four years. If this cost was passed onto the County, we in Cascade County would take on the additional burden of over \$24,000 annually. This amount represents more than half the salary of a public health nurse or snowplow operator. According to the Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research, earnings in Cascade County's economy grew by 1.3% in 2012 - the smallest gain of any of Montana's large counties. Cascade County's economy has remained relatively flat. With the slow growth projected to continue, I ask that this committee support including annual maintenance of the MT Votes system in HB-2 to alleviate shifting the burden to our local level where it would impact the services we provide to our residents. Thank you.